

February 24, 1976

I would just say that as to the Syas ... Senator Syas' statement about the number of bills that we have reduced the number of bills by at least one-third since the bi-annual sessions. We used to have up to ... in '69 we had almost 1500 bills. The last two four-year periods we have had only 1,000 bills. This last two years the same way, a little over 1,000 bills. We are reducing bills. We are introducing fewer bills. We are killing more bills. The bills are getting better attention in the committee.

If you'll look at your worksheet today you'll find that there are a great number of bills that have been indefinitely postponed at this stage. I think this is what legislation is all about. As Senator Kelly said, it's more important that we give attention to bills. That means sometimes killing them. Senator Duis said this stops long-range planning by the executive. I stress "by the executive". We want some input as a Legislature. The whole object of going back to the biannual session would be to take away from the legislative branch of government that equation ... that equating power we have through the annual session to say to the executive "We have input, we develop long-range planning along with you". If we went to biannual sessions again we'd go right back to where we were. There would be no long-range planning by the legislative branch. That's what I decry.

Senator Kelly, I agree with you, tradition dies hard. Those who opposed this bill, back in 1969, are still opposing this approach of the annual session today. You'll find the ones that are opposed to it are still the same that voted against it when it was on the ballot and when it was up for a vote here in the Legislature in '69.

Now the shell game, as Senator Kelly said, comes about in that if the Governor wants us, the Legislature, to be hanging on a string to be pulled in at his beck and calling, that's the way we'd have all these special sessions of the Legislature.

Consider for a moment when Senator Mahoney wants us to go to 120 days every two years, consider for a moment that in 1965 our biannual session lasted, our biannual session, lasted 149 days. In 1967 our biannual session lasted 134 days. In 1969 our biannual session lasted 165 days. But that didn't tell the whole story. In these five legislative sessions in four years, from '67 to 1970, we had five sessions. In other words, we had that many special sessions in addition to the ... we had two special sessions in '69. We had two special sessions in '68. We had special sessions all along. You would just begin to learn what it's all about with special sessions.... It is positively impossible to restrict ourselves to 120 legislative days in this day and age in the modern sense when 41 states have already agreed with Nebraska. In fact all of our neighbors agreed with us before we ever got to the annual session. We were that far behind. We are now up-to-date. We have staff capabilities we never had before and that's the difference in the money. I'm not going to apologize for the money the Legislature is spending to do its job, to equate its load in the separation of powers in this state.

I oppose bringing back this bill which was correctly killed by the Committee.